United Nations S/PV.7614

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7614th meeting

Thursday, 28 January 2016, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Bermúdez	(Uruguay)
Members:	Angola	
	China	
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	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2016/27)

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16-02099 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2016/27)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; and Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Keating and Mr. Madeira, who are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2016/27, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Keating.

Mr. Keating: I am delighted to speak to the Security Council so early in my tenure. It is a pleasure to brief the Council alongside Ambassador Madeira, who has been in-post since December 2015 and therefore is an old hand already as compared to me.

Before I start, allow me to pay tribute to my predecessor, Nicholas Kay, who handed over a Mission that is in good shape. All my interlocutors in Mogadishu — Somali and international, African Union and United Nations — have stressed the critical role he and his team played in the past two and a half years.

I would also like to pay tribute to the international community and to the Council, which has played a pivotal role on Somalia for several years. The unity of the Council is a fundamental requirement for progress in Somalia. I look forward to working closely with it.

Let me begin with some first impressions. I was lucky enough to have spent some time in Somalia in my youth, when Mogadishu was thriving, and again in the 1990s, when it was in turmoil. My two weeks as Special Representative of the Secretary-General have not been Somalia's easiest, marked as they have been by tough political negotiations and marred by two horrific terrorist attacks. Yet the Somalia I see today is closer to that of my childhood memory than to that of the nightmare of the civil war. It is a country of enormous potential, of determined people of entrepreneurial spirit, with extraordinary natural resources, a privileged geographic location and a natural gateway. Somalis know their potential, and they will not be deterred from realizing it. In the wake of the terrible attacks at El Aade and Lido beach, their spirit is doubly impressive.

I pay tribute to the bravery and dedication of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and its troops and to the courage of the Somali people. Kenya has vowed not to be deterred by the attack against its soldiers. Equally, Somalis are neither cowed nor deflected from their goals by Al-Shabaab atrocities. That is not to underestimate the challenges ahead. But, as we enter a critical year for the country's transformation, Somalia's steady progress will continue. That will require Somali leadership and the sustained support of the Council. Success in Somalia in 2016 will depend upon managing threats, notably those posed by Al-Shabaab, as well as seizing the opportunities that political progress will bring about.

The security situation remains very challenging. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission will say more on that. We owe a great debt to the courage and dedication of AMISOM soldiers.

Somalia's security requires a comprehensive approach — a full-spectrum approach, as the Secretary-General indicated in his plan of action for preventing violent extremism. Our political, security, development and human rights efforts must proceed together and reinforce each other.

Military and counter-terrorism efforts need to be accompanied by stronger policing and the rule of law. A priority must be to strengthen federal institutions and regional capabilities within Somalia as the basis for a longer-term transition plan for AMISOM. That

needs to be complemented by work to strengthen institutions, generate jobs in the private sector and reduce dependence upon humanitarian aid.

Security remains a paramount concern. Too many civilians and too many soldiers are dying. Al-Shabaab remains a present threat. I am encouraged by the commitments made on security-sector reform by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in September 2015, including a comprehensive review of the sector, timely and adequate pay by electronic means and transfer to a unified biometric registration system. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and its partners stand ready to support those important initiatives.

The Federal Government is currently developing a national security policy, which is urgently required. The establishment of a national security architecture must be complemented by the establishment of clear police, justice and corrections models for Somalia in the context of federalism, not least as the basis for coordinated support by international partners. I hope we see progress on that set of issues before the High-level Partnership Forum, to be held next month in Istanbul.

The humanitarian situation remains worrisome. The underlying causes of Somalia's protracted crisis remain unresolved. Millions of children, women and elderly people are acutely vulnerable. In total, some 4.9 million people, representing 40 per cent of the total population, are in need of humanitarian assistance. Over 1.1 million people remain internally displaced. Some 300,000 children under the age of five are acutely malnourished. Millions lack access to basic health care, water and sanitation.

The Somalia humanitarian country team recently launched the humanitarian response plan for 2016 with a total requirement of $885 million to save lives, strengthen livelihoods, improve access to basic services and protect vulnerable groups, including by seeking durable solutions for the internally displaced. The overarching objective is both to meet pressing need, build resilience and reduce dependence on humanitarian aid. It needs to be generously supported.

All our efforts will be conditional upon political progress. Last November, thousands of Somalis across the country, from all walks of life, took part in a national consultative forum. That signalled a decisive step forward towards democracy: transparent and inclusive consultations on an electoral model for 2016, with the active participation of women, youth and minorities. The Mogadishu Declaration of 16 December 2015 outlined key principles, including on term limits, the quality of the electoral process and the participation and representation of women and youth.

It therefore gives me particular pleasure to share some breaking news with the Council. This morning, a decision was taken by the Somali Cabinet on the electoral model to be used later this year. That is the culmination of almost six months of intense consultations. It may be a watershed moment, marking the growing political maturity of a federal Somalia. The Federal Government has taken a bold decision. Leaders of the Somali regions, while many differences and concerns remain, recognize its importance. As I speak, they are engaged in discussions around its implementation.

Reaching a decision on the electoral model was not easy. Following repeated rounds of consultations among Somali leaders, in Kismayo and Mogadishu, and prolonged deadlock, the leaders of the Federal Government recognized that the national interest demands forward momentum. The model envisages that a lower house of 275 members, based on maintenance of the 4.5 power-sharing formula between the clans, and an upper house of 54 members, based on equal representation of the existing, emerging and prospective federal member states and the allocation of additional seats to the pre-existing entities of Puntland and Somaliland. This is a Somali-devised model. It is Somali-led and Somali-owned. Unity among international partners in support of the process leading to that decision has been exemplary. International partners will need to work with Somali stakeholders to ensure its timely implementation. I hope I have the support of the Security Council in that endeavour.

The decision marks an important milestone for Somalia, the Federal Government and the leaders of the federal member states. There are many more ahead. The journey is going to be long and bumpy. Much work remains to be done on the details related to the implementation of the electoral model and to ensure agreement of a political road map for the period from 2016 to 2020, to deliver universal elections by that date. We must navigate around potential obstacles and will face obstructions along the way. Spoiler behaviour will need to be contained. And we must be ready to provide assistance to federal and regional leaders.

Real momentum could and should result from the breakthrough that has been achieved today. That could spur other critical political processes. I welcome the launch of the state formation process in Hiraan and Shabelle Dhexe on 12 January. Once that process is finished and the status of Mogadishu Banadir is clarified, the map of the new, federal Somalia will be complete. Progress has also been made in recent months on the review of the Provisional Federal Constitution. A technical review of 10 of its 15 chapters has been completed, and the major political issues to be addressed are now much clearer.

The federalization process must not just be a top-down, mechanical exercise; to succeed in the long term, it must be an endeavour in which all the people of Somalia have a real stake. There is much left to do to ensure reconciliation and unity. Freedom of expression and opinion has been challenged in recent months, and I call upon the Somali authorities to respect that freedom.

Ambassador Madeira and I are looking forward to strengthening and deepening the working relationship between the United Nations and the African Union on the ground. In line with resolution 2245 (2015), we will convene a senior leadership coordination forum among UNSOM, AMISOM and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) to discuss our strategic and operational priorities. We are committed to taking full advantage of the creation of UNSOS, and the opportunities that affords for greater coherence and effectiveness.

We share a commitment to implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy with respect to United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, which remains an important tool to promote respect for human rights and ensure accountability in a volatile military context. If its are objectives to be met, a strong working partnership with AMISOM, as well as with the individual troop-contributing countries is essential, including to follow up on allegations and ensure accountability. That is in all our interests. Human rights violations will erode the population's support for AMISOM and for the Somali Federal Government.

As I have outlined here, the challenges are manifold. In the coming months I will work with Somali leaders, civil society and the international community to support a comprehensive approach embracing political, security, development and human rights priorities. The exciting thing is that increasingly politics is displacing violence as a means of resolving differences among Somalis. There is an eager desire to advance and leave the suffering and divisions of the past behind.

Let me conclude by saying that the unity of the Security Council and the coherence of the broader international community provides a powerful basis for the United Nations and our African Union partners to make a decisive contribution to Somalia's future. The Council has my commitment and that of the entire United Nations team that we will support the leaders and people of Somalia to realize their goal of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future.

I hope to achieve more before the high-level partnership forum in Istanbul and look forward to seeing members there in February.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Keating for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I thank you, Mr. President, most sincerely for the opportunity to brief the Security Council alongside the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, my colleague and brother Mr. Michael Keating. I welcome him to Somalia since he has admitted that I am his senior, having arrived there one week earlier than he did. It is my belief that we shall continue to build together on the good working relations already established by our predecessors in the delivery of our shared mandates.

I am briefing the Council barely two weeks after the deadly attack on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) El-Ade base in the Gedo region and the Lido attack. The attack in Gedo and previous attacks on AMISOM forward operating bases illustrate the continuing threats that we all face in the fight against Al-Shabaab. I pay tribute to all the AMISOM uniformed personnel who continue to exhibit professionalism, tenacity and courage in the campaign to degrade Al-Shabaab's capacity. I would also like to make special mention of the troop- and police-contributing countries. Once again, I would like to express my grief and condolences to the families of all our fallen heroes who have paid the ultimate price not only in the service of Africa but also in the preservation of global peace and security.

My briefing today will focus on the recent security and political developments in Somalia. Since my predecessor last briefed the Council in May 2015 (see S/PV.7445), we have continued to make considerable security gains. AMISOM and the Somali National Army commenced renewed offensive operations, code-named Operation Juba Corridor, in July 2015. These joint operations are currently in their third phase and are expected to be completed by March. The overall strategic objective of the current operations remains to considerably degrade the capabilities of Al-Shabaab in each remaining stronghold. That would provide the enabling environment for the advancement of the much-needed political process.

The dislodging of Al-Shabaab from towns and villages under its control has overstretched AMISOM capacity, with the attendant security implications, which Al-Shabaab is trying to exploit, as the attacks in El-Ade and similar attacks in Lego and Janale suggest. Al-Shabaab has changed tactics by launching a combination of asymmetrical and direct attacks on AMISOM bases. In that regard, we have seen an incremental growth of guerrilla warfare as well as the use of improvised explosive devices in their attacks. Overall, the security situation in Somalia has remained somewhat fluid, volatile and unpredictable in some aspects, despite the territorial gains that we have achieved so far.

On the political front, I am encouraged by the progress that the people and the Government of Somalia continue to make in the state formation process, the revision of their Constitution, and the preparation for the holding of elections later this year. With regard to state formation, earlier this month the Government embarked on the process for the formation of the final regional administration for Hiraan and Shabelle Dhexe, to which my colleague alluded earlier. We welcome that initiative and continue to ask the Federal Government of Somalia to take the necessary steps towards achieving a positive outcome that would lead to the establishment of this last regional administration.

In the area of elections, as expressed jointly with Mr. Keating, we are very pleased that an electoral model was unanimously agreed by the Government just yesterday, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General just mentioned. That model is based on a unique balance of representation between clan and constituency and offers a hopeful outlook for an inclusive electoral process. I continue to urge the Council and other partners to support the Federal Government of Somalia in the effective implementation of this electoral model.

Based on the declared principles and time frame of the election, I would like to commend the Federal Government of Somalia for reaffirming its commitment to respecting the constitutionally mandated terms of the legislature and the executive, which expire in August and September, respectively. This is consistent with the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. While the political progress made is laudable, much more needs to be done in the consolidation of this process, as well as in the rejuvenation of the constitutional review process, which remains a critical pillar of political stability in Somalia.

I would like to reassure the Council that the African Union (AU) remains committed to supporting peace and stability in Somalia amid the immense sacrifices made and challenges that the Mission continues to face. In that regard, I should like to urge the Council to consider strengthening our partnership in the following areas in order to further enhance the implementation of the AMISOM mandate.

First, I would like to emphasize that the Somali National Army is central to the conduct of joint operations with AMISOM, as well as to taking over security functions in the recovered areas in order to facilitate continued offensive operations. It is also of note that the only viable process that will lead to the achievement of the AMISOM mandate in Somalia and its subsequent exit strategy is the standing-up of a capable, legitimate and inclusive Somali National Army. In the same vein, I urge the Council to ensure that the pledges made towards the Guulwade Plan are fulfilled. The international community also needs to be better coordinated in its support for Somali security forces and otherwise.

Secondly, I would like to stress that better coordination between the multiplicity of partners — and specifically among AMISOM, the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) — remains vital now more than ever before. The Council will recall that resolution 2245 (2015), adopted on 9 November 2015, underscored the need to ensure operational effort and cooperation between UNSOM and AMISOM so that they are aligned with a common set of strategic priorities. Under the new leadership of Mr. Keating and

myself, we are hopeful that there will be progress in the strengthening and revitalization of the joint senior leadership decision-making framework, and we are already working on that. I also look forward to the joint development of the quantitative compact between the Head of UNSOS and myself, which is expected to enhance the provision of support to AMISOM. Our recent interactions with the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support on the provision of timely and flexible support to AMISOM has been very positive and encouraging.

Thirdly, the provision of additional enablers remains central to AMISOM operations. It will be recalled that the Governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have pledged helicopters to AMISOM. However, the tripartite letters of assist between those troop-contributing countries, the AU and the United Nations remain outstanding. We would like to urge the Council to request the Secretary-General to facilitate an expedited negotiation process that takes into account the unique nature of AMISOM's offensive mandate. That would allow for the deployment of those assets, which are urgently required to boost the operational tempo of AMISOM and to dislodge Al-Shabab from some places throughout Mogadishu.

Fourthly, the AU is committed to improving AMISOM's strategy in Somalia. I am pleased to report to the Council that the AU is currently organizing a summit for troop-contributing countries, which is expected to lead to a political commitment by the various stakeholders on how to address, among other issues, command and control, the provision of additional enablers and enhanced overall coordination. The summit will take place in due course later this year.

Finally, the decision of the European Union (EU) to cut the allowances to the uniformed personnel of the Mission by 20 per cent, starting this January, has caused great concern. The African Union Commission is making every effort to fill the gap created by the EU decision. In that regard, the AU recently appointed Mr. Donald Kaberuka as the High Representative for the African Union Peace Fund, responsible for the mobilization of additional resources for AU peace support operations. Immediate steps are also being taken to generate additional funds for AMISOM. However, that is occurring in the context of an economic downturn owing to the drastic decrease in commodity prices. Hence, I would like to urge the Council to consider various funding mechanisms that would sustain the current support for AMISOM, including through increased financial support by the United Nations, individual Council members and other relevant stakeholders, in the interest of global peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Madeira for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.